

PASTORAL LETTER

OF

HIS LORDSHIP THE RT. REV. JOHN FARRELL, BISHOP OF HAMILTON,

Publishing the Jubilee of 1865.

JOHN FARRELL, BY THE MERCY OF GOD AND THE GRACE OF THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE, BISHOP OF HAMILTON, &c.

To the Clergy, the Religious Communities, and all the Faithful of Our Diocese, health and blessing in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We received, dearly beloved brethren, the Encyclical of His Holiness Pope Pius IX. of the 8th of December last, proclaiming to the whole Catholic world a plenary indulgence, in the form of a Jubilee; and, accompanying this most important and consoling document, a Syllabus, or catalogue of certain capital and pernicious errors of the present age, against which, in his pastoral solicitude for the flock of Christ entrusted to his keeping, he seeks to put all Christians on their guard.

From the summit of the Apostolic dignity to which he was raised, in the person of Peter, whose lawful and glorious successor he is, the Sovereign Pontiff, commissioned by Jesus Christ to guard and to feed with salutary doctrines the children of men, views with bitter sorrow the spread of fatal errors which the enemy of all good sows broadcast in the bosom of society, thereby stifling the good seed of the pure and unchanging Word of God and causing the ruin of innumerable souls. Guided by the Spirit of his Divine Master, he has spoken; and his words—dictated not by flesh and blood, or any human expediency—have already been heard, and seen, and felt throughout the world, filling the hearts of true believers with joy and consolation, whilst they only excite the rage and indignation of the enemies of God and His glorious Spouse the Church.

It is our most pleasing duty, dearly beloved brethren, at this season, which we have chosen as most favorable, to call your attention to these teachings and admonitions of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, giving to them the adhesion of our whole soul, and at the same time to open to you the overflowing sources of grace and heavenly sweetness which a merciful God has prepared for us during these days of salvation.

Refreshed and sanctified in the fountains of the Saviour, during this most acceptable time of the Jubilee, in union with the Visible Head and all the members of the Church, we will be enabled to present ourselves with confidence before the Throne of Grace, in order to draw down from the Father of lights and the God of all consolation those good and perfect gifts which we stand in need of to escape the snares of our enemies and to persevere in the paths of truth, of justice, and of peace.

It will not be necessary for us, dearly beloved brethren, nor would it be possible within the limits of an ordinary Pastoral, to expose to you in detail the various errors pointed out by His Holiness. Those errors, thank God, are hardly known amongst you; and the zeal and timely prudence of our worthy co-operators in the salvation of your souls will supply the brevity of this Pastoral, by commenting, from time to time, to their congregations, at least on such portions of the Encyclical and Syllabus of His Holiness as may be advisable, or necessary for the protection and enlightenment of those entrusted to them.

We direct the attention of all to what the Sovereign Pontiff says concerning indifferentism in matters of religion, the sacred and inalienable rights of the Roman Pontiff and of the whole Church over church property, the necessity of the true religion to the well-being of civil government and society in general, the right of the Church to conduct the education of her children, and, finally, the condemnation and anathemas pronounced against secret societies, *whether bound by an oath of secrecy or without such an oath*, such as certain societies which imprudent and irreligious men seek to introduce into this country under the garb of love for Ireland and zeal for the House of God, whilst experience proves that such societies have ever been the curse of Ireland, and that their members very soon lose all respect for the Church and its Pastors, who cannot follow them in their extravagant vagaries. We invite the young men of our flock rather to enter into some of those societies or confraternities which God, through His Church, has blessed, and in which they will find the effectual means of grace to overcome the wicked one and to advance in the divine and lightsome paths of virtue. We deem it our sacred duty to warn all confessors not to administer the sacraments to members of societies calling themselves Fenians or Hibernians of Canada, but to treat them as *ipso facto* excommunicated.

Now, dearly beloved brethren, having invoked the Holy Name of God, we have decreed and ordained, decree and ordain, as follows:—

1st. That the Jubilee in this Diocese shall open on the last Sunday of the present month, and close on the last Sunday of September: the opening and closing to be announced by the ringing of the church bells for a quarter of an hour the eve, after the Angelus, and the last day of the exercises at the same hour. N.B.—Pastors of Missions who might find another month of the present year more convenient, may apply to us for a change of time.

2ndly. That the public exercises commence by the *Veni Creator* and terminate by the *Te Deum*, the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament being permitted with due ceremony each day.

Conditions for gaining the Indulgence of the Jubilee:—

1. To visit twice during the appointed time the Church of the Mission, or the place where Mass is usually said, and there to pray according to the intention of the Pope.
2. To confess and communicate reverently. Children, however, who have not made their first communion, may gain the indulgence without communion.
3. To fast on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of one week during the time of the Jubilee.
4. To give alms to the poor. We recommend the Local Pastors to collect the alms and apply them to one of our asylums of charity.

Confessors are authorized, for a reasonable cause, to dispense from any or all of the above conditions, and to enjoin some other good works in their stead. The Priests of this Diocese, and those of the neighboring Dioceses whom they may invite, are authorized to absolve from all cases reserved to the Holy See or to us, and to commute vows, except those of religion or perpetual chastity.

In conclusion, dearly beloved brethren, let me exhort you to duly appreciate and avail yourselves of the graces offered you during these days of salvation. This Pastoral shall be read at the Parochial Mass in every Mission, and in chapter in all the Religious Communities, the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at Hamilton, from our Episcopal Palace, this 6th day of August, the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

By His Lordship.

E. J. HEENAN, PFR., SECRETARY.

† JOHN, BISHOP OF HAMILTON.